

## Questions Asked Through the Chat Box During the February 21<sup>st</sup> IEP/Common Core Webinar

Q: Even though special educators have to write goals on students' grade level standards and have to state expectations for their progress, many of my special education students (I teach 4th/5thgrade) are reading at 1st, 2nd, or 3rd grade level. With the Arizona Common Core State Standards, can we still teach a standard on a student's ability level while writing the goal on grade level?

Teams write goals based on individual student needs that align the state standards. The components for writing goals do not change with the new standards. Additionally, goals should be aligned to enrolled grade level standards while addressing the student's needs and strengths (regardless of taking AIMS or AIMS A). Goals need to be written based on individual student's needs while giving the student access to the general curriculum, which includes the standards. Goals should be written so as to be attainable (yet challenging) and to allow a student to be able to make progress in the general curriculum.

Q: Will ADE/ESS be going over Arizona Common Core State Standards for high school students with moderate intellectual disabilities (MOID)?

Like other students 16 years of age or older, these students must have IEPs that include appropriate measurable postsecondary goals that are annually updated and based on age appropriate transition assessment, transition services (including courses of study), and annual IEP goals related to the student's transition services needs, all designed to reasonably enable students to meet their measurable postsecondary goals. Secondary transition specialists provide training on best practices in developing secondary transition IEP components for students with lower cognitive abilities. ADE/ESS is in the process of contracting speakers to present and discuss Common Core State Standards for high school students with MOID at the annual transition conference, but will also be developing and presenting regional trainings around this topic over the next school year.

Q: Will ESS supply any samples of high school standards with examples of baselines and appropriate goals?

There are samples of high school annual goals in the Guide Steps section of the current monitoring manual, as well as in the *Compliance Monitoring and Indicator 13: Bricks and Mortar* PowerPoint presentation, both of which are available here:

- <http://www.azed.gov/special-education/program-support-monitoring/>
- <http://www.azed.gov/special-education/files/2012/09/m1.8-compliance-monitoring-and-indicator-13-bricks-and-mortar-ppt-handout.pdf>

The components that are required for writing measurable annual goals do not change with the new standards. A student's instructional level plays a significant role in how an annual IEP goal is developed. By law, the States must have a set of academic standards to which public education agencies (PEAs) must adhere. In turn, all PEAs must develop their curricula, which are based on those state-determined academic standards. IEP annual goals must be based on the PEAs' curricula; therefore, goals based on PEAs' curricula are aligned to the state standards.

Q: Can the trainings in March be videotaped and shared on the web?

No, but we will be offering future regional trainings on the topic of the IEP and the Arizona Common Core State Standards.

Q: Can you please help us by explaining how the Arizona Common Core State Standards apply to students in special education self-contained classrooms that serve students with cross-categorical disabilities?

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Nothing changes regardless of the location of the delivery of service. A self-contained classroom is no different from a classroom in which a student receives special education services in the general education classroom. The student's program still needs to be individualized. The only difference is the location.

Q: I am a speech pathologist that works with students with specific learning disabilities (SLDs). Given that language/literacy is my major focus with these students, can you suggest which areas I should focus on in trying to redesign my IEP goals?

IEP goals are developed by the team. The focus for the language/literacy goals must be determined by the student's needs.

Q: While I feel that the reading fluency goal is appropriate and very ambitious, I thought we were not supposed to write goals that show the student is still falling below the standard. In other words, the goal may look as though we are setting low expectations, but that goal may represent huge gains for the student.

There is no law, regulation, or guidance document that states a team must develop goals that show a student is meeting the standards if formal (and informal) assessments show that a student is falling far below the standards for the grade level. If a goal begins with a baseline of performance, any gains achieved by the end of the IEP will be clear. An IEP team is required to ensure that the student is making progress in the general curriculum; if there is lack of expected progress, the team should reconvene to determine the causes and revise the IEP if the student is not progressing satisfactorily. Goals should be challenging yet attainable in the life of the current IEP.

Q: I think many of us are stuck on IEP GOALS and the Arizona Common Core State Standards as opposed to just IEPs and the Arizona Common Core State Standards. Accommodations are part of the IEP, so maybe we need to start looking at accommodations as equally as important as goals in order for our students to have access to the curriculum.

There is no single part of an IEP that is more important than the rest. The entire IEP and what is required to be addressed within it is what allows the student to access and progress in the general curriculum.

Q: How will general education teachers be trained/expected to address speaking and listening standards? What accommodations will be folded in for ELL students?

OELAS has trained in this area for a long time as it has always been a part of the ELP Standards. ADE has addressed more in-depth professional development modules in Speaking and Listening which will benefit both general education teachers with ELLs and SEI teachers. This PD includes scaffolds, visual aids, etc. to support explicit instruction. For information on current trainings, please visit these links:

- [http://www.ade.az.gov/onlineregistration/SelectEvent.asp?viewall="yes"&GroupID=23](http://www.ade.az.gov/onlineregistration/SelectEvent.asp?viewall=)
- [http://www.ade.az.gov/onlineregistration/SelectEvent.asp?viewall="yes"&GroupID=81](http://www.ade.az.gov/onlineregistration/SelectEvent.asp?viewall=)

Q: I have students whose category is specific learning disability (SLD), but they are so low functioning that they also attend a class in the self-contained classroom because they are training to take the AIMS A. Because they are SLD, the goals need to be written using the Arizona Common Core State Standards. There are very few that are appropriate in reading, writing, and math. Do you have any suggestions?

First make sure that the student is eligible for the CURRENT alternate assessment (AIMS A). Eligible students must meet all three of the following criteria\*:

*\*= The eligibility criteria will be changing in the future since alternate standards will not be used starting SY2014-2015.*

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1. The student should have evidence of a significant cognitive disability. Typically, students with a specific learning disability do not have a significant cognitive disability. Another part of the criteria is for the student to have a flat profile (based on IQ scores, achievement scores, and adaptive behavior rating scores in all content areas).

2. The student must be receiving instruction based on the alternate standards and have goals and objectives aligned to the alternate academic standards.

3. The student must require intensive instruction.

The eligibility form can be accessed here: <http://www.azed.gov/special-education/files/2012/08/aims-a-eligibility-form-2012.pdf>.

Q: What do we do about the students who, by middle school, are years below grade level in reading and are not able or confident enough to attempt getting the word off the page on their own? We can certainly teach content and standards through accommodations, but what are we going to do about students' continuing to have to take state tests at grade level?

All students with IEPs are required to take the state tests regardless of what that test involves (whether they are eligible to take the AIMS A or not).

Q: Can you tell us a little about the assessment for the Arizona Common Core State Standards as it pertains to the one percent of students with severe cognitive disabilities?

Arizona is part of a national alternate assessment consortium for students with significant cognitive disabilities called the National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC). There is an overview of the instructional supports for mathematics on the AIMS A homepage: <http://www.azed.gov/standards-development-assessment/assessing-students-with-disabilities/aims-a-2/>. In addition, NCSC is beginning to post information on their website: [www.ncscpartners.org](http://www.ncscpartners.org).

With the transition to the new alternate assessment, Arizona will no longer have alternate academic standards (starting 2014–2015 for reading and math). We will be using the instructional supports rolled out from NCSC as a way to provide access to the CCSS. The new alternate assessment will be computer based (and very similar to what Arizona currently has in place). NCSC states are working with a vendor to develop item types, and we will be field testing this new assessment next spring. For more information, please contact Audra Ahumada, Director of Alternate Assessment, at 602-542-4061.

Q: Will there be more professional development workshops in the area of special education? It seems to me that special education students are still the forgotten group. There is not much opportunity for special education teachers like me to go to trainings on the Arizona Common Core State Standards.

Yes. Many times the trainings that are being provided en masse are attended by the directors or case managers. The expectation is that each PEA attending trainings will build capacity within that PEA and that those who do attend the trainings will become the trainers of teachers. How the training information is passed along depends on the structure and dynamics within each individual PEA. If you would like more information on the professional development offerings available and other supports from ADE, please contact your director or your monitoring specialist.

Q: Are the current Alternate Academic Standards posted on the ADE website?

Yes, the current Alternate Academic Standards are located on the following webpage under Alternate Academic Standards:

<http://www.azed.gov/special-education/aimsa/teachers/>.

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